



BUILDING MORE SIDEWALKS MAYOR NICKELS' ACTION SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The City has nearly **500 miles of streets without sidewalks** and for many years has not had an aggressive program to get sidewalks built in residential areas. Three factors have contributed to this problem

1. **Funds have been limited.** The City's base funding for sidewalk construction and related improvements was \$750,000 in last year's budget.
2. **The costs got out of hand for basic sidewalk designs.** Recent designs have been costed out at a number approaching \$1 million per block – clearly too expensive!
3. **The City stopped aggressive use of a financing tool called Local Improvement Districts (LIDs).** Historically, Seattle had built much of its sidewalk infrastructure through LIDs. LIDs happen when neighbors decide to invest together in desired improvements. Sometimes the costs exceed what the residents can contribute. When this becomes an issue, the mayor's plan calls for the City to join in as a potential funding partner.

PROGRAM GOALS

The mayor's direction to the Seattle Transportation and Public Utilities departments is to **dramatically** increase the number of residential sidewalk projects undertaken each year and to bring back the aggressive use of LIDs.

2003 Target

- 35 blocks completed or starting construction by the end of 2003.

2004 Target

- 45 blocks completed or starting construction by the end of 2004.

The City's average production over the last ten years has been a dismal 5 blocks/year, so the 2003/2004 targets represent **major** productivity increases.

CRITICAL STEPS

1. **Reduce costs** of sidewalk designs so our money goes much further. Our design teams have come up with a \$250,000 per block cost estimate – an obvious improvement over the \$1 million cost per block.
2. **Bring back aggressive use of LIDs.** The City will work proactively with neighborhoods that want improvements to help them form LIDs. We will come up with cost effective, environmentally sound designs that will work for each neighborhood's situation. In many cases LIDs can fully fund their projects, but where LID funds can't cover all the costs, the City can join as a partner and make our combined dollars stretch much further to get more sidewalks built.
3. **The mayor's budget will add an additional \$2 million to the existing Transportation and Drainage budgets.** This money will be used to partner with residential neighborhoods needing sidewalks.
4. **Combine the initiative on sidewalks with a new emphasis on natural drainage.** This will mean new designs, and additional cost savings.

WE ARE STARTING NOW

- Piper's Creek is an exciting natural drainage/sidewalk project scheduled for construction in 2003. This will be 16 blocks of new improvements in the Piper's Creek watershed. The High Point Redevelopment Project located in West Seattle is also slated for this type of sidewalk/drainage investment.
- The citizens in the Crown Hill neighborhood have already requested the City's help in forming a LID for 16 blocks of new sidewalks.
- The Seattle Department of Transportation and Seattle Public Utilities will put the finishing touches on this sidewalk initiative program and launch this aggressive new approach by January 1, 2003.